



Office of Management's Monthly Newsletter

The Beacon

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
Office of Management
Ronald Hicks, Deputy Administrator

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e-mail: fsis.servicebeacon@usda.gov

bea-con (bê' ken) *noun*

A signaling or guiding device, such as a lighthouse, located on a coast. A source of guidance or

RON'S CORNER

A Star Is Born

by Ron Hicks
Deputy Administrator
Office of Management
Telephone: 202-720-4425

Mike Grasso, Special Assistant to the Deputy Administrator, Office of Policy, Program Development and Evaluation, has many noteworthy accomplishments to his credit in his career with FSIS. He can now add "film star" to the list. When the Office of Government Ethics (OGE) was developing a new Ethics video last fall, they asked USDA for several employees who could appear on camera to discuss how the Code of Ethics guides them in their work. The Dept. contacted FSIS for a candidate, and Mike Grasso was identified.

Standing in front of the hot lights, Mike was not given a script, or told what to say. He was asked a series of general questions, and his extemporaneous responses were captured on film. After hearing no more about this project for several months, he received an invitation to the "premiere" of the new OGE video, "Ethics: Know The Code". In the 12-minute video, Mike and other government employees comment on the ethical principles under which we all work. After the film was shown, Mike and the others each received individual acknowledgement and a certificate, presented by Stephan Potts,

Director, OGE. Initial reviews indicate that Mike does an outstanding job in front of the camera, which reflects favorably on FSIS. When the video becomes available, FSIS will acquire copies and will see to it that as many employees as possible see it. Way to go, Mike!

CRD is moving to Beltsville, MD

Effective February 22, 2000, the Office of Management's Civil Rights Division (CRD) is relocating to the USDA George Washington Carver Center in Beltsville, MD. Their new mailing address is:

USDA FSIS CRD
Maildrop 5261
5601 Sunnyside Avenue
Beltsville, MD 20705-5261

Telephone: 1-800-269-6912
Fax: 301-504-7746.

CRD joins the Administrative Services Division as well as the Beltsville District Office at the Carver Center. To ensure priority service, Shelia Clemmons, Director of CRD or a member of her team will staff an office in the South Building on a daily basis.

FSIS Notice 3-00, accessible in the "Agency Issuances" Outlook Public Folder, contains an attachment listing employee names, titles, location, telephone and facsimile numbers, and city and state.

WORKFORCE OF THE FUTURE

Workforce of the Future Focus On: Consumer Safety Officer Report to Congress

by: Yvonne Davis, Chair
Workforce of the Future Steering Committee
Telephone: 202-720-6617

In March, the Workforce of the Future Steering Committee will be meeting for the second time to discuss the budget and a number of other issues affecting the workforce of the present, as well as that of the future.

On February 15, as requested, the Agency transmitted to Congress its report on the Consumer Safety Officer initiative. In that report, FSIS indicated we hope to advertise about 25 to 50 Consumer Safety Officer GS-696 positions before the end of Fiscal Year 2000 (September 30, 2000). A number of logistical factors will determine if we are able

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to do so. Food safety and practical considerations will determine where those pioneer CSO positions are advertised.

In our report to Congress, we described why FSIS needs Consumer Safety Officers now, throughout the frontline workforce and the Agency, to continue to strengthen our public health and consumer protection effectiveness. That is why we originally requested additional funding to establish a significant number of CSO positions in FY 2000.

The revised plan for Fiscal Years 2000 and 2001 as outlined in the report to Congress would slow the pace of implementation and would reduce relocation costs by announcing CSO positions in local commuting areas where there are sufficient numbers of qualified potential applicants. This approach would minimize the need for relocations, a cost associated with filling from within. If Congress concurs with the revised implementation plan, the Agency will likely announce a small number of CSO positions in the last quarter of FY 2000. The positions would be funded within our basic appropriated funds, since the FY 2000 appropriations included no additional funding for the CSO introduction.

The Agency's overall objective is to introduce the CSO series in a manner that (a) provides the best results, in food safety and public health terms; and (b) maximizes the likelihood of successful CSO implementation. To meet those two prerequisites, we believe it is imperative that we (1) begin implementation of the new series drawing from our current workforce, which has a "hands-on" understanding of the inspection environment; and (2) implement the pioneer CSOs within a "network" so they can provide support to one another, even though they may be

dispersed throughout the country. The Agency's next step is to develop specific criteria for determining the potential FY 2000 CSO assignments so that we meet our objective. We must factor in cost as well as public health and food safety in developing those criteria.

The Agency will also consult and impact bargain with the National Joint Council of Food Inspection Locals before any Consumer Safety Officer positions are filled, and will engage in discussions with the National Association of Federal Veterinarians and the Association of Technical and Supervisory Professionals.

A copy of the Report to Congress on the Consumer Safety Officer initiative is posted on the FSIS website under Communications to Congress. You may also obtain a copy by requesting it from Yvonne Davis through e-mail or on 202-720-5397.

Attachment 1 to this edition of the *Beacon* contains questions and answers the steering committee and the Minneapolis Human Resources Field Office have recently received on the CSO initiative. If you have questions about the Workforce of the Future, you may direct them to: Workforce of the Future (on Outlook); or to one of the members of the steering committee: John Esgar (in the Minneapolis HRFO) at 800-370-3747, Joanne Bolton, Sharin Sachs, or Yvonne Davis in Washington, DC at 202-720-5362.

BUDGET

The FSIS FY 2001 Budget

*by Marianne Okal
Budget Division
Telephone: 202-720-4432*

The FY 2001 President's Budget was submitted to the Congress on February 7, 2000. For FSIS, the

budget includes a current law appropriations request of \$687.9 million, which is an increase of \$38.5 million over the FY 2000 appropriation. Of the total increase, \$26.8 million is for mandatory pay and benefit cost increases, including \$1.0 million for State inspection program costs.

An increase of \$7.3 million for three initiatives is requested for the President's Food Safety Initiative. To expand risk assessment, \$1.5 million is requested to study *Listeria* and *Campylobacter*, update laboratory information technology, and establish a fellows program to obtain leading edge scientific expertise. This program will focus on hiring individuals who have recently completed post-doctoral work and research in particular fields to broaden applicant pools in the growing food safety area. An additional \$3.8 million will enable FSIS to develop new collaborative programs with State and local governments to promote national food safety standards. An increase of \$2.0 million is also requested to begin implementation of the Shell Egg Action Plan, which would expand FSIS oversight to shell egg packing establishments.

The Budget also includes several proposals that reflect projected changes in the meat and poultry inspection program. A net increase of \$3.5 million is requested to implement changes from the HACCP-Based Inspection Models Project effective July 1, 2001 in broiler plants. Half of all broiler plants are expected to implement changes in the last quarter of FY 2001 and half in the first quarter of FY 2002. The net increase includes \$1.5 million to upgrade approximately 725 Food Inspectors and 100 Veterinary Medical Officers, \$2.7 million to relocate 150 poultry inspectors, \$0.7 million for three weeks of training, and \$1.4 million in savings from an anticipated reduction of 47 other-

than-permanent staff years. In a separate proposal, appropriations savings of \$4.0 million and 150 staff years are projected, beginning in the third quarter of FY 2001, when processing inspection is conducted predominantly on a once daily, unscheduled basis. Currently, processing inspection is conducted on each of a plant's shifts, from one to three times daily. This change in the frequency of processing inspection is also expected to significantly reduce overtime inspection, with a projected decrease of \$19 million in reimbursement receipts.

Additional budget initiatives include \$1.6 million to support HACCP work unit meetings and \$1.5 million to increase reviews of both State and foreign inspection programs. An additional \$1.0 million will strengthen U.S. leadership in international food safety through the Codex Alimentarius Commission through outreach seminars for international Codex delegates to educate them about science-based factors; technical training seminars for U.S. Codex delegates; and increased travel to carry out this work. Further increases include \$0.5 million to provide mandated USDA civil rights training; and \$0.2 million for a senior staff position to accelerate FSIS regulatory reform efforts to completion.

The President's Budget also proposes legislation for new user fees and emergency funding authority. The user fee proposal is the same as the proposal that was included in the FY 2000 Budget, which was not enacted. The proposal estimates an appropriations reduction of \$534.1 million to recover all federal food safety program costs from the meat, poultry, and egg products industries. If enacted, new user fees would reduce FY 2001 appropriations to \$153.8 million. Legislation is also proposed to cover food safety emergencies by providing the

Secretary with authority to transfer funding to FSIS from other appropriations or available funds.

The Agency's hearing before the House Appropriations Subcommittee is scheduled for March 21. Currently, no hearing before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee is anticipated. Following the hearing, FSIS will respond to the written questions of both Subcommittees concerning the budget request and Agency operations. By early summer, the Subcommittees are expected to "mark up" the Budget and produce House and Senate appropriations bills subject to action by the full Appropriations Committees and votes by the full House and Senate. Differences in the House and Senate appropriations bills will be reconciled by the Committee of Conference and become the Conference Bill. When the full House and Senate pass the Conference Bill, the bill will be forwarded to the President to be signed into law.

FORMS

You Want A Form In A Foreign Language? No Problem!

*by Daniel T. Brooking
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4217*

Forms and Reports Management is no stranger to foreign languages. We compose forms in 16 languages. The analysis used to design the form is separate from the form's language component. Analysis may dictate the elements on a form and general size, and suggest how to combine information and effect a process, but the number of languages required, their complexity, the fonts used and their size greatly impact the final design. The European Economic Community's forms use as many as 11 languages on each form. We work from paper, electronic

translation documents, and faxed text. Faxed copies are not always clean so we often encounter difficulty distinguishing between accent marks, printer specks or smudges. Text is often too small, bleeds, or fills-in ("*c*" becomes "*o*" etc.) making it difficult to read. It's not unusual to see an analyst peering through a printer's loupe (*magnifier*) to verify the text.

A letter in a foreign language may carry several different accent marks. If the standard design fonts do not have the accents we need to compose text for a particular language, we search for additional fonts. If that doesn't work, we download fonts from the Internet or use letters from a mixture of similar fonts to produce words with the appropriate accent marks. Our first Russian form gave new meaning to the phrase "hunt and peck". We take the initiative, reviewing and comparing foreign dictionaries and translations (*from both hard copy and the WEB*) to ensure accuracy.

To create a foreign export certificate we use several fonts, from various resources, in infinite combinations. After we determine all of the accented characters needed for a particular language, we develop a bar guide. Each accented character is copied into a special text frame that is placed at the top of the form. We can then select and copy any special character into our text as we compose. A special text frame is developed for each language. Once you get a feel for a language, you notice when something just doesn't look right. Currently, we are testing new software that will make it easier to produce accent marks.

There are several foreign language forms on hold, pending approval from their respective governments. Before these forms can be finalized, the foreign governments must compare translations to ensure accuracy of the language. The analysis involved in consolidating

similar information in different foreign languages is time intensive and may take several days to complete.

Time is often a critical factor requiring more than one analyst to work on the same form (*each taking different languages*). Although time intensive, it's never dull. At a time when very few government agencies produce foreign language forms and agencies are outsourcing difficult documents, we are proud of the proficiency we have developed.

VDIP

Nonverbal Communication

by Milo Christianson

Telephone: 612-370-2000

Kathy Welsh

Telephone: 202-720-5657

Labor and Employee Relations Division

Whenever two or more people are involved in a conversation, especially one involving a disagreement or dispute, they might be saying one thing but their nonverbal communication or body language might be conveying a very different message. Words can conceal as well as reveal. Since nonverbal communication is more spontaneous than verbal communication, we usually have less control over it. Therefore, nonverbal communication can provide a more accurate portrayal of someone's true meaning than verbal communication alone.

Frequently, we have to look at nonverbal communication in clusters, since isolated gestures are like individual words in a sentence – difficult to interpret. For example, crossed arms may be a defensive gesture. On the other hand, crossed arms could simply mean that the person is just cold or does not know what to do with his/her arms. However, if we add a rigid body stance, glancing or darting eyes,

minimal eye contact, and a clenched jaw, our original interpretation that this person is being defensive seems much more likely.

To understand nonverbal communication, it is also important to keep in mind that many cultural differences come into play. The way someone interprets a nonverbal message may not be the way the other person intended, particularly if the individuals involved have different cultural backgrounds. That is why it is so important to ask clarifying questions to determine the true meaning the other person is trying to convey

Attachment 2 to this edition of the *Beacon* contains an inventory of nonverbal behavior has been adapted from Cormier and Cormier, *Interviewing Strategies for Helpers*, Brooks/Cole, Monterey, California, 1985. Please review the inventory. We would also be very interested in learning if any of the behaviors described have other possible meanings in different cultures. If they do, please send them to Kathy Welsh, USDA, FSIS, Room 3175S, 14th and Independence Ave. S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250. The e-mail address is kathy.welsh@usda.gov.

We will share those other possible meanings in future articles. Be sure to identify the *dimension, observed behavior, other possible meaning(s) and the culture involved*. We would also like to know your *name* and *phone number* in case we have any questions. We will keep that information *confidential*. Thanks for your help.

HUMAN RESOURCES

January/February Retirements

Robert J. Adamson, FI, OFO,
Decatur, AR, 01/29/00, 8 Years

Edward H. Bernhardt, CSI, OFO,
Sarasota, FL, 01/28/00, 23 Years
James R. Brighton, SVMO, OFO,
Emporia, KS, 01/28/00, 14 Years
John R. Click, CSI, OFO, Lima, OH,
02/03/00, 30 Years
William F. Dailey, Supvr Lbr Rel
Spec, Washington, DC, 12/31/99,
28 Years
Steve E. Engels, FI, OFO,
Waterloo, IA, 01/29/00, 13 Years
Bernardo D. Estabillo, SVMO, OFO,
Ferndale, WA, 02/03/00, 23 Years
Audrey E. Hallett, FI, OFO,
Millsboro, DE, 01/29/00, 30 Years
Howard H. Hargroder, SVMO, OFO,
Hammond, LA, 01/31/00, 11 Years
Linda K. Key, FI, OFO, Gadsden,
AL, 01/29/00, 29 Years
Cindy L. Larson, FI, OFO, Holcomb,
KS, 01/29/00, 3 Years
Larry F. Leis, CSI, OFO, Modesto,
CA, 01/29/00, 31 Years
Donald G. Martin, FI, OFO, Holton,
KS, 02/01/00, 35 Years
Joe McWilliams, Supvr Personnel
Staffing Specist, Washington, DC,
02/03/00, 33 Years
Joseph A. Milicia, FI, OFO, Grass
Valley, CA, 01/29/00, 31 Years
Barbara K. Mullins, Correspondence
Management Spec, 01/29/00, 24
Years
Theodore R. Otakie, CSI, OFO,
Rome, NY, 01/15/00, 12 Years
Samuel W. Paratore, CSI, OFO,
Cleveland, OH, 01/29/00, 30 Years
John C. Pater, FI, OFO, Marshall,
MN, 01/29/00, 15 Years
Ramon Perez-Caraballo, CSI, OFO,
Utucó, PR, 01/31/00, 31 Years
Doyle D. Rogers, Mgmt Asst, Dallas,
TX, 01/29/00, 25 Years
Gary W. Sperber, VMO, OFO,
Escanaba, MI, 01/28/00, 31 Years
Joseph Walsh, Complnc Offcr,
OFO, Atlanta, GA, 01/31/00, 32
Years
Kathryn J. Wiley, FI, Hinton, VA,
01/28/00, 28 Years

Leave Transfer Recipients

1. Jackie Copeland
OFO, DC; Illness
2. Annie Stewart
POB, MN; Serious Illness

3. Linda Cole
OPPDE, DC; Serious Illness
 4. Sonya West
OPPDE, DC; Maternity
 5. Joyce Schultz
POB, MN; Serious Illness
 6. Stephanie Showell
OFO, DE; Family Illness
 7. Michael Schwochert
OFO, CO; Surgery
 8. Linda Carey
EMS, DC; Surgery
 9. Nancy Clyburn
OPHS, DC; Surgery
 10. George Olson
OFO, MN; Family Illness
 11. Mary Sutton
OPHS, GA; Complications
w/pregnancy
 12. Marilyn Weber
FPC, IA; Illness
 13. Robert Martz
OFO, IA; Serious Illness
 14. Betty Morgan
OFO, AR; Family Illness
 15. Carolyn Woolfolk
OFO, DC; Surgery
 16. OFO-99-0027
OFO, NC, Surgery
 17. Theresa Spoering
OFO, MN; Surgery
 18. OFO-99-0034
OFO, SD; Family Illness
 19. Karen Wratchford
OFO, KY; Surgery
 20. Maureen Murphy
OFO, OK; Surgery
 21. Tammy Love
OFO, AR; Surgery
 22. Sue Engels
OFO, IA; Family Illness
 23. Michael Craig
OFO, NE; Family Illness
 24. Nicole Wareham
OFO, IN; Maternity
 25. Michelle Long
OM, DC; Surgery
 26. Glenda Snyders
OFO, KS; Surgery
 27. Angela Cuello
OFO, TX; Serious Illness
 28. Mona Eder
OFO, IL; Maternity
 29. Aurbrey Tribble
OFO, FL; Serious Illness
 30. Jacqueline Bonner
OFO, AL; Surgery
 31. Denise Bassell
FPC, IA; Illness
 32. John French
OFO, GA; Family Illness
 33. Victor Varnadoe
OFO, OH; Family Illness
 34. OFO-99-0049
OFO, MA; Surgery
 35. Tommie Olson
OFO, NE; Surgery
 36. Clement Grangier
OFO, MD; Serious Illness
 37. OFO-99-0047
OFO, IA; Surgery
 38. Mark Spear
OFO, AL; Surgery
 39. Dunita Harris
OFO, TX; Maternity
 40. James Layman
OFO, OH; Serious Illness
 41. Karen Wesson
OFO, DC; Surgery
 42. Brandy Blevins
OFO, CA; Serious Illness
 43. Vandora Hampton
OFO, VA; Serious Illness
 44. OFO-00-0006
OFO, AL; Illness
- * While not consenting to the publication of their names, certain LTP recipients are assigned a number that they may provide to their co-workers if they choose so that donated leave may be transferred to their account. Any questions on the LTP should be referred to the Human Resources Field Office on 1-800-370-3747 for field employees and to the Classification and Compensation Branch for HQ employees on 202-720-6287.

Locality Pay

by Janice Carpenter
Budget Division
Telephone: 202-720-4590

On December 21, 1999, the President signed the Executive Order on the January 2000 pay adjustments. The Executive Order provided for an across-the-board increase of 3.8 percent in the rates of basic pay for Federal workers under the General Schedule (GS).

The 32 locality pay areas (including the "Rest of U.S." areas) are unchanged from 1999. Information on the pay increase and locality pay areas can be found in the FSIS Notice on the 2000 Pay Increase that will be available shortly. The information can also be accessed on the Office of Personnel Management web page at www.opm.gov.

Employees are responsible for reviewing their leave and earning statements and comparing them with the locality pay charts to ensure that the amount indicated accurately reflects the salary for their official duty station. This is particularly important if the employee's headquarters' office or plant change. Failure to assure the accuracy of salary information will preclude a waiver in the event that the employee is being overpaid. Any questions concerning your official duty stations should be directed to the Human Resources Field Office.

Conduct Reminder

by Mark Leking
Labor and Employee Relations
Division
Telephone: 202-720-5657

It is appropriate and helpful for all of us to be reminded from time to time, what our ethics and conduct responsibilities are. By knowing what the "rules of the road" are, we can steer clear of any trouble.

This reminder concerns the use of government computers for personal use. This could involve using the computer for accessing the Internet, or sending e-mail, for personal reasons. The Internet and e-mail have proven to be valuable tools to assist us in performing our government jobs in a more effective and efficient manner. However, if we use them for non-official purposes, we run afoul of the regulations. Also, personal use of the computer does not have to

involve the Internet or e-mail to be considered misuse.

Some examples of misuse that can get employees in trouble are:

- passing along "chain letter"-type messages to others
- searching and downloading vacation information
- conducting research, and preparing papers for night school classes

Very often, any violations that occur involve not just the prohibition against using government equipment for non-official purposes, but also misuse of official time. And in situations where sexually explicit or discriminatory or threatening images or language are involved, an additional regulation may be violated, in that it could constitute a type of conduct that is prohibited and unbecoming a Federal employee.

The Field Automation and Information Management (FAIM) Orientation Package is quite succinct in summing up this policy. It states: "The policy is quite simple. Government computers and government software are to be used for official government work." This applies to all of us. As always, it is advisable to ask beforehand if something is acceptable to do, rather than to act, and then find out afterward that it wasn't.

Another FSIS Notice on this subject will be issued shortly.

MAIL MANAGEMENT

Government Stamps

by Carol Zrioka

*Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4215*

We recently received an inquiry from FSIS employee Patrick R. Walters asking if a government stamp could be used to mail the Bank of America bill. Travel

regulations stipulate that the cost of postage for mailing Bank of America payments are reimbursable when claimed as a miscellaneous expense on the travel voucher. Therefore, the use of an official postage stamp for remitting such payments is prohibited.

SUPPLIES

33 Cent Stamps Are In

by Pete Bridgeman

*Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4222*

We now have the 33 Cent Official Government Postage Stamps in stock in Landover. These will replace the 32 Cent Stamps, and will have the same Item Number, FSIS-17A.

Laboratory Supply Line Update 1-877-709-1982

by Robyn Johnson

*Eastern Laboratory, Office of Public Health and Science
Telephone: 706-546-3571*

FED EX preprinted Airbills

Preprinted FedEx airbills are normally sent with sample submission forms for the following projects: MT03, MT04, MT05, MT06, MM31, SDMM30, and all of the egg sampling programs. The preprinted FedEx airbills for all other projects can be ordered from the Landover Maryland Supply Center. The laboratories do not carry the regular preprinted airbills.

In case of an emergency ask for blank airbills from your FedEx driver and fill out the form using this account number: 1596-4814-1. This account number is for use with any type sample but must be limited to official samples only.

FED EX "Stamp"

The "four pound stamp" is for use with the HACCP sampling program

only. The stamps are pre-metered for a four-pound HACCP box only (small green lettered box). The "two pound stamp" is for use on the Pathology (new yellow or old grey) sample boxes only.

Laboratory Sample Designation

As a general rule of thumb, always make sure the address on your FedEx airbill/stamp matches the laboratory designation on your sample submission form. On some sample types such as HACCP, the sample will be discarded if it is received at the wrong laboratory (discard code 39). If you are sending in samples for HACCP and the sample boxes are not being returned this is the first thing to check.

Sample Request Forms

The three field laboratories do not print or distribute sample request forms. These forms can be ordered directly from headquarters by pressing the number 4 at the prompt on the supply request line. Blank sample submission forms can also be ordered from the Landover ServiceCenter.

STOP, CAST, SIFT, ORBIT- Field Test Kits

The Midwestern Laboratory in St. Louis supplies all species field test kits. They also supply the STOP and CAST test kits. These test kits can be ordered by pressing the number 2 at the prompt on the supply request line.

New Hard Cover Sample Box Coolants

All three field laboratories now have the new reusable blue hard cover coolant. Please be patient as we replace the old with the new. (We are just as happy to lose the leakers as you are!!!)

Use of Small "HACCP" Box

The small box with green lettering was designed for the HACCP/CAMPY sampling program. These boxes are designed to maintain acceptable temperature on a very small sample – 25 g of ground tissue, 1 small sponge, or 30 ml of fluid. If these boxes are used for any other type of sample there is a high possibility the sample will arrive in an unsuitable condition. (Georgia's summer average high daytime temperatures are around 90 degrees.) Please call the supply line to request a regular sized shipper when needed.

Miscellaneous Sampling Supplies

Sample bags and rubber bands are now ordered from the Landover Service Center. Currently they only carry the 6 x 12 sample bag. If larger bags are needed, call the supply line and request larger bags from the laboratory. The laboratories carry two larger sizes: 10 x 18 and 18 x 24. Sterile supply kits are provided in the sample box for HACCP, CAMPY, and E. coli. Extra sampling kits can be ordered from the supply line. (Remember with HACCP sampling to order sample kits from the designated laboratory on the sample submission form to avoid discard 39.)

Sampling Supplies for E. coli O157:H7

If any sample boxes are in the field with labels that say E. coli O157:H7 or any variation thereof, please remove the labels or mark through them completely. FedEx assumes there is definitely a biological hazard in the box and may not deliver or pick up.

The three field laboratories receive a listing of plants scheduled for E. coli testing one month prior to the collection date. This list changes from week to week. Each laboratory

sends supplies at least one week before the actual test period begins. As the samples come back into the lab the boxes are held for the next week's group. Therefore you will not receive this box back.

MT07 plants (state plants) should call the supply line: request sampling supplies for MT07 and give a current plant address since most of these plant address are not normally in our database. Remember we cannot ship to a PO Box.

If you are taking a set of 15 consecutive samples please call the supply line and state this fact. We will send you boxes coded for your plant. A box containing needed sampling supplies will be returned to you as you submit your samples.

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

Multi-District Safety and Health Committees

by John Admire

Alameda District, Office of Field Operations

Telephone: 707- 964-7408

At this time last year, the Multi-District Safety and Health Committee for the Alameda, Boulder, Salem, and Minneapolis Districts met in the Salem District Office. One of the first items on the agenda was to establish a goal or "mission statement" for the Committee.

It was decided that the goal should be to "acquire, access, and distribute" information gathered at the meetings to the field that would promote safety. I took this concept back to the Alameda District. I briefed Dr. Prasad (District Manager) and Dr. Malak, (Deputy District Manager) on this idea. They were immediately enthusiastic about the concept and asked how we could best put this into practice. It was decided that this could best be

done by my meeting one on one with the local Safety Committees. I could answer questions directly as well as take questions and/or suggestions and relay them to the Multi District Committee.

Together with the full cooperation of my Circuit Supervisor, (Dr. Aquino) we have established a line of information distribution that we feel has made a huge difference in the promotion of safety awareness. Our District Office aggressively supports every opportunity available to keep building on the concept to "acquire, access, and distribute" information. We encourage anyone with comments or suggestions to send them to the District Office and we will include them in our quarterly Alameda Bulletin Newsletter.

Safety and Health Videos

by Tom Wright

Administrative Services Division

Telephone: 301-504-4246

The following videos have been added to the lending library maintained by the FSIS, Continuing Education and Distance Learning Center at College Station, Texas:

Hazard Communication—What's Wrong with This Picture, 17 minutes (min.)

Fire Evacuation in the Workplace, 15 min.

Crimes of Opportunity—How To Protect Yourself, 30 min.

Emergencies: Hurricanes, Tornadoes, and Floods, 16 min.

Drive Safely, 9 min.

Hearing Conservation, 12 min.

The following are short 5 to 8 minute videos:

Forklift Safety

Material Safety Data Sheets

Human Behavior—Reducing Unsafe Acts

Preventing Slips and Falls

Video Display Terminal Safety

HRDS, Continuing Education and Distance Learning Center
Crystal Park Plaza
2700 E. Bypass 6, Suite 1600
College Station, TX 77845-5015
Fax: 409-260-9579
e-mail: Bob.Burke@usda.gov

Safety and Health Poster

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) require each agency to display a poster at the workplace informing employees of the provisions of Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, Executive Order 12196, and the agency safety and health program. Traditionally, USDA agencies have displayed Form AD-1010, Occupational Safety and Health Protection for USDA Employees at each location where USDA services or operations are performed. In recent years the availability of the poster and the accuracy of the name, location and telephone number of the safety and health contact on the poster have been become a matter of concern. In addition, OSHA has issued a revised poster for use by Federal agencies.

To remedy these concerns and to provide FSIS employees with a current poster, over the next several months, FSIS will be printing and distributing posters with the name, location, and telephone number of the safety and health contact printed on the poster. We plan to mail a poster to each FSIS workplace, including meat, poultry, and egg product plants, Agency laboratories, and the major office facilities. To revise a poster, FSIS will print and distribute a current version. By taking these actions, every workplace should have an up-to-date poster on display.

ISSUANCES

Recent Agency Issuances

by Corinne Calhoun
Administrative Services Division
Telephone: 301-504-4233

The following notices and directives have been issued since the January 2000 edition of *The Beacon*. Many recent issuances are available in an electronic format from the "PCDIALS" library in Opendesk and from the "Agency Issuances" public folder in the Exchange mail system (Outlook).

Notice 1-00 (1/4/00)
Change in Billing Rates

Notice 2-00 (1/13/00)
Change in Mileage Rate

Notice 3-00 (2/15/00)
Relocation of the Civil Rights Division
Office of Management

Notice 4-00 (2/15/00)
Annual Notice of Right to Request Union Representation

Directive 3800.1, Rev. 2, Amend. 10 (1/10/00)
Temporary Duty Travel Within CONUS

Directive 4791.1, Rev. 2 (2/1/00)
Basic Occupational Safety and Health Program

Directive 7700.1 (2/22/00)
Irradiation of Meat and Poultry Products

Directive 8080.1, Rev. 3 (1/19/00)
Recall of Meat and Poultry Products

Directive 11,000.1 (1/25/00)
Sanitation Performance Standards

Directives and notices are distributed automatically to applicable Agency employees and

offices. Additional copies are available from:

USDA FSIS ASD P&DS
MAILDROP 5241
5601 SUNNYSIDE AVENUE
BELTSVILLE MD 20705-5241

TEL (301) 504-4242
FAX (301) 504-4277

ESRA

The USDA Employee Services and Recreation Association (ESRA)

by Vikki Beaty
Administrative Services Division and FSIS Representative, ESRA Board of Directors
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The ESRA is a nonprofit organization that has provided USDA employees services and activities since 1906. The ESRA purpose is to promote, conduct, and sponsor recreational, educational, wellness and other activities and services that will benefit its members by improving morale, which can result in improved productivity. Membership is open to all USDA employees, including retirees, contract employees within the Department, and family members.

The ESRA headquarters is the "Ag Connection" located in the Ag Promenade of the South Building (3rd wing sub-basement) Washington DC.

The ESRA has its own website: <http://www.usdaesra.org>. Note: going to other websites through ESRA returns 5% of the ticket sale to the association!

Some of the services provided by ESRA:
The ESRA "Ag Connection" is the employee store and buying service: photo processing (next day service), photo supplies, travel products,

"Barcelona" nuts, USDA logo items, sundries, magazines, gift items, laminating service, wearing apparel, business cards, and gift certificates. The store has catalogs for the United Buying Service, which provides savings on the purchase of automobiles and furniture; and, the Employee Printing Service, which saves up to 40% on invitations, cards, etc. The store also carries the USDA Graduate School textbooks as well as a large selection of popular literature.

The ESRA provides other retail and service operations: Prescription Service, Insurance Service, Dry Cleaners/Shoe Repair, Barber Shop/Hair Salon, McGill's Deli, and Conference Room.

ESRA Fitness Centers are located in the Ag Promenade mall, the George Washington Carver Center (Beltsville, MD), 1800 M Street NW DC, the Riverdale (MD) USDA Center, and a new operation may open in Kansas City, KS in the near future (more information forthcoming).

The ESRA provides a number of insurance programs: group term life, accidental death and dismemberment, individual

retirement annuity, major medical plan for temporary employees and families, automobile insurance, viatical policies, long term disability income, supplemental health benefits, hospital income plan, supplemental retirement plan, and professional liability.

A wide variety of recreation activities are sponsored on a year-round basis: team sports and special interest clubs, such as walking, caving, chess, theater. If there is a particular club you would like to see get started, contact ESRA.

Educational opportunities are sponsored at headquarters, most over the lunch period: stress management, real estate planning; weight control, photography, cancer prevention, long term care, CPR training, money management, pre-retirement planning, karate/self-defense, and smoking cessation.

Trips and tours are sponsored throughout the year, most within a few hours drive of DC, although on occasion vacation tours have been offered: Atlantic City, whitewater rafting, Christmas shopping in Pennsylvania, cruises, ski weekends, sailing, Tangier Island, and New York City.

If you are planning a vacation, ESRA offers discount coupons for many hotels, resorts, and car rentals. The ESRA can also assist with group travel plans.

Discount tickets can be purchased for events, theme parks, and holiday destinations. Tickets can be ordered by phone (credit card orders only) by calling 202-720-ESRA. There is a small shipping/handling charge for phone orders.

The ESRA has a catalog of several of the products carried in the store. The catalog allows employees to order items by mail, through the toll-free number: 1-800-626-ESRA, or at the ESRA website.

To comment on this newsletter or to submit an article for publication, please contact:

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The current and past editions of *The Beacon* are available electronically on the FSIS OpenDesk and Exchange mail systems as well as on the FSIS Website at: www.fsis.usda.gov/om/adserv.htm

ATTACHMENT 1

**Workforce of the Future
Consumer Safety Officer Positions
Questions and Answers**

Q1. Will 696s eventually cover small and very small plants?

A. Yes. Over time, FSIS plans to introduce the Consumer Safety Officers series throughout the frontline workforce, and throughout the Agency. CSO positions will be established in assignments where the duties require the knowledge, skills, and abilities of a scientific generalist, and thus, support classification to the professional CSO series. Plant size is not a factor in determining where CSO positions will be established.

Q2. How will the agency reduce personnel numbers without selectively choosing inspectors who the agency thinks will not move or by bypassing inspectors close to retirement age?

A. The Agency's goal is to increase the proportion of employees with general scientific backgrounds in our workforce in order to be more effective in food safety and consumer protection. Although FSIS is certainly interested in minimizing unnecessary growth in the total workforce, it would be counter-productive to reduce the total number of inspection personnel. Keep in mind that the Agency is now having difficulty filling many entry-level inspector positions in certain areas of the country, and Congress has also asked FSIS to report on staffing and recruitment. Once we have firmly established the Consumer Safety Officer series as a key FSIS occupational series, we believe we will have less difficulty in recruiting entry-level technical inspectors because they will see a potential career ladder.

Regular merit promotion procedures will be used to fill positions. The Agency will not practice age discrimination in implementing the CSO series. As noted above, we believe that success in implementing the Consumer Safety Officer series depends on having our current employees pioneer the occupation. The Agency has adopted guiding principles for the transition to the workforce of the future (enclosed) which will guide key decisions. This is the right thing to do.

Q3. Will an individual 696 eventually cover assignments that are currently covered by 2 or more inspectors? (In other words fewer inspectors for the same number of plants.)

A. No, it is not true that one Consumer Safety Officer GS-696 will take over the duties of two GS-1862 Consumer Safety Inspectors. It is true that we are gradually incorporating more professional inspection positions into the workforce. Over time, we expect to see a greater proportion of professional to technical inspection positions, and we expect to see the Consumer Safety Officer GS-696 become a primary FSIS occupational series. We do plan that in the process of redesigning the workforce so that it supports the redesigned inspection system, we will find ways to minimize unnecessary workforce growth, on a national basis. However, at this point in time the Agency is much more concerned about retaining experienced inspection employees.

Q4. Will some situations exist where plants are inspected by both Series 1862 and Series 696 employees?

A. Yes. However, keep in mind that the Consumer Safety Inspector GS-1862 and the Consumer Safety Officer GS-696 would have complementary and not duplicative responsibilities. In addition, depending on the specific situation, there might be Food Inspectors GS-1863 and Veterinary Medical Officers GS-701 assigned to the plant.

Q5. Will all non-line inspectors eventually be relief 1862s or 696s?

A. No, although some current technical inspectors will be assigned to relief Consumer Safety Inspector positions for meat/poultry inspection; some will be assigned to egg products inspection (HACCP for egg products remains to be addressed); and some current technical inspectors will compete for and be selected for CSO GS-696 positions.

Q6. Will inspectors who were former Food Technologists be allowed to convert to the new series if their area is targeted for the CSO position?

A. As reported in a February *Beacon* article, the CSO positions currently require that fully-qualified applicants meet a selective factor, which is: "experience in assessing food safety or other consumer protection systems by independently developing and applying a plan to evaluate the scientific adequacy of a manufacturer's plans and processes for producing safe products".

To ensure that Agency employees will meet that selective factor, the Agency has developed a Career Enhancement training program so that selected employees can be trained in that skill. The Department's merit promotion plan requires that employees compete for any jobs where training will substitute for normal qualifications. Therefore, former Food Techs cannot be converted to CSO positions, but have to compete for such positions. Additionally, employees moving from one-grade interval to two-grade interval positions must compete if the two-grade interval position has a higher promotion potential. Consequently, professional CSO GS-696 vacancies must be filled competitively if the GS-696-11 grade level is above the grade level or potential grade level on an applicant's position.

We know that many current permanent employees now meet the educational, experience and time-in-grade requirements for the CSO series (or will become qualified). Some of them may choose to compete and others may not choose to compete for CSO vacancies as they are announced. Of current permanent, qualified employees who apply, some will be selected and some will not be selected.

For many years, we expect to have a mix of Consumer Safety Officer (GS-696) positions, Consumer Safety Inspector (GS-1862) positions and Food Inspector (GS-1863) positions in the Agency. Over time, the proportion of professional CSO positions can be expected to increase and the proportion of technical inspection positions can be expected to decrease, although it is unlikely we will ever completely phase out the Inspector position. Our goal, as we gradually transition to the workforce of the future, is to have a position in that workforce for every current permanent employee.

Q7. What is the future of compliance officers? Will their responsibilities be increasing or decreasing as 696s are added to the workforce of the future?

A. A task force on the role of the Compliance Officer of the Future is now looking at those very questions. A strong enforcement capability remains essential in a HACCP-based inspection system. The complexity of the food production system continues to increase, meaning that new types of enforcement problems can be expected to occur. Therefore, we envision that in the future, our enforcement ranks will continue to include many Compliance Officers. We envision that some Compliance Officers will also be Consumer Safety Officers with the appropriate blend of traditional enforcement and scientific generalist skills. As much as possible, we would hope to fill those positions from among current employees. Compliance Officer responsibilities related to working with the states may expand if state-inspected plants are granted the authority to ship in interstate commerce, an issue before Congress now.

Q8. In the *Beacon*, September 1999, Ms. Glavin said that approximately 2600 non-line inspectors were reclassified to the GS-1862 series. How many of these 2600+ inspectors will eventually have their present duties reclassified to the 696 series? (Which I assume will mean relocation for the 1862. Is that assumption correct?)

A. Unfortunately, your assumption is not correct. It would be certainly be convenient if we could, with a stroke of the pen, simply reclassify all employees in the technical GS-1862 Consumer Safety Inspector series as professional GS-696 Consumer Safety Officers. However, as mentioned above in A7, we cannot. The Consumer Safety Officer positions are indeed new positions. CSOs perform different work than technical inspectors do; for example, they assess the science underlying a hazard analysis and perform other duties that require knowledge of fundamental scientific principles.

We believe that many current technical inspection personnel (including some of the now more than 3,000 Consumer Safety Inspectors) may meet the qualification requirements for the professional CSO series and we hope those employees will choose to compete for CSO positions as vacancies are announced.

Q9. If there are now 2600+ non-line inspectors, how many 696s and 1862s will there be covering non-line inspection by some fixed date (let's say January 2005 unless you have a better date)?

A. Sorry, but your question can't be answered yet. There are now more than 3,000 Consumer Safety Inspectors GS-1862 in the FSIS workforce, because about 270 Food Inspector GS-1863 positions assigned to very small plants were reclassified 1/31/00 in conjunction with implementation of Pathogen Reduction/HACCP in very small meat and poultry inspection. We hope to add 25-50 Consumer Safety Officers in FY 2000, but the pace of implementing the CSO series depends on many factors, including funding. So we can't be specific about numbers just yet.

Q10. If a new 696 position is established in a plant that has a non-line processing inspector that does not qualify for the new 696 position, what will the agency do with that inspector?

A. As mentioned in the report to Congress on the CSO initiative, the Agency must find ways to minimize relocation costs. Therefore, the Agency will consider whether, in addition to a pool of qualified candidates in a commuting area, there are vacant positions to which a non-selected inspector could be assigned when establishing CSO positions. Relocations of non-selected employees outside of the commuting areas would be as costly as relocating employees into a commuting area. Therefore, work reduction procedures would be followed as a last resort, i.e., the inspector would be reassigned within the local commuting area if a vacant position at the same grade exists. If one does not exist, the inspector would be offered a position at his/her same grade level outside the commuting area or a lower graded position within the commuting area if available. In other words, the Agency will explore options other than mandatory separations, which we were able to avoid during the reorganization for HACCP, and believe we can avoid in implementing the CSO occupation. Mandatory separations are costly in financial as well as human terms.

Q11. There has been some talk that overtime would be eliminated in the near future. Is this true and when do you reasonably expect this to happen?

A. The President's FY 2001 budget request includes proposals that would have the effect of eliminating much overtime in the future. Over the next several months, both the House and the Senate will be holding hearings on the Administration's budget request. Although we are likely to get indications how each house will react over the next few months, it is not until the final appropriations bill for FY 2001 becomes signed into law that we will know for certain. That is not likely to occur until this summer or fall.

ATTACHMENT 2

**Voluntary Dispute Intervention Program (VDIP)
Nonverbal Communication**

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Observed Behavior</u>	<u>Possible Meaning</u>
EYES	Direct Eye Contact Lack of Eye Contact Lowering Eyes Staring Darting Eyes Squinting Tears	Attentive, Desires Interaction Avoidance, Withdrawal Preoccupation Uptightness, Rigidity Anxiety, Excitation Thoughtful, Perplexed Sad, Frustrated, Sensitive
MOUTH	Smile Tight Lips Lower Lip Quivers Mouth Opens – No Words	Positive Feeling or Thought Stress, Anger, Hostility Anxiety, Sadness Surprise, Fatigue
FACIALEXPRESSION	Eye Contact & Smiles Eyes Strained, Jaws Set Face Flush, Red Neck Blotches	Happy, Comfortable Anger, Concern, Sadness Anxiety, Embarrassment
HEAD	Nodding Head Up & Down Shaking Head Left To Right Hanging Head, Jaw Down	Agreeing, Listening, Being Attentive Disagreement or Disapproval Sadness or Concern
SHOULDERS	Shrugging Leaning Forward Slouched Or Turned Away	Uncertainty, Ambivalence Openness, Eager, Attentive Not Receptive To Exchange
ARMS & HANDS	Arms Folded Across Chest Hands Fidgety & Trembling Fists Clenched, Hands Held Tight Arms Unfolded, Gesturing Hands & Arms Stiff, No Gestures	Avoidance, Defensive, Anxiety or Anger Anger Open To Personal Exchange Tension or Anger
LEGS & FEET	Legs & Feet Relaxed Crossing & Uncrossing Legs Foot Tapping Legs & Feet Are Stiff, Controlled	Open, Comfortable Anxiety, Depression Anxiety, Impatience Uptight, Anxious
TOTAL BODY	Facing Other Person Squarely Turning Body Away or To Side Rocking In Seat or Squirming Sitting Erect & Rigid Repetitive Tapping, Twisting Hair Breathing Becomes Slow & Deep	Open to Exchange Less Open To Exchange Less Open To Exchange Tension, Anxiety, Concern Bored, Distracted, Defensive More Comfortable & Relaxed

ATTACHMENT 3

**C, F, and G Fund Monthly Returns
March 8, 2000**

Months	C Fund	S&P 500 Stock Index	F Fund	Lehman Brothers U.S. Aggregate Bond Index	G Fund
1995 (Jan. - Dec.)	37.41%	37.58%	18.31%	18.47%	7.03%
1996 (Jan. - Dec.)	22.85%	22.96%	3.66%	3.63%	6.76%
1997 (Jan. - Dec.)	33.17%	33.36%	9.60%	9.65%	6.77%
1998 (Jan. - Dec.)	28.44%	28.58%	8.70%	8.69%	5.74%
1999 (Jan. - Dec.)	20.95%	21.04%	(0.85%)	(0.82%)	5.99%
1999	%	%	%	%	%
March	3.99	4.00	.54	.55	.47
April	3.86	3.87	.29	.32	.46
May	(2.36)	(2.36)	(0.89)	(0.88)	.47
June	5.54	5.55	(0.33)	(0.32)	.49
July	(3.14)	(3.12)	(0.43)	(0.42)	.52
August	(0.50)	(0.50)	(0.05)	(0.05)	.53
September	(2.78)	(2.74)	1.15	1.16	.51
October	6.34	6.33	.38	.37	.53
November	2.00	2.03	(0.01)	(0.01)	.51
December	5.90	5.89	(0.45)	(0.48)	.54
2000					
January	(5.03)	(5.02)	(0.34)	(0.33)	.56
February	(1.93)	(1.89)	1.22	1.21	.53
Last 12 Months *	11.57	11.73	1.07	1.11	6.29

Percentages in () are negative.

The C Fund is invested in the Barclays Equity Index Fund which tracks the S&P 500 stock index. The F Fund is invested in the Barclays U.S. Debt Index Fund which tracks the Lehman Brothers U.S. Aggregate bond index. The G Fund is invested in special issues of U.S. Treasury securities.

The monthly C, F, and G Fund returns represent net earnings for the month, after deduction of accrued administrative expenses. The C and F Fund returns also reflect the deduction of trading costs and accrued investment management fees.

The C, F, and G Fund monthly returns are dollar-weighted: they reflect net earnings on the changing balances invested during the month.

*** The C, F, and G Fund returns for the last twelve months assume, except for the crediting of earnings, unchanging balances (time-weighting) from month to month and assume earnings are compounded on a monthly basis.**

The C and F Fund returns vary from the index returns because of C and F Fund expenses, changing balances in the C and F Funds, and differences in returns between the Barclays funds and the underlying indexes. The index returns are time-weighted: they assume constant dollar balances invested during each month and throughout the period.

Future performance of the three funds will vary and may be significantly different from the returns shown above. See the "Summary of the Thrift Savings Plan" for detailed information about the funds and their investment risks.